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ABSTRACT

An overview is presented of the mechanisms for financial support, institutional resources, and institutional accountability that are needed to improve the teaching and learning environment in the California community colleges. Introductory material outlines the educational reforms that have affected the colleges, underscores the need to reaffirm the primary mission of the community colleges, and puts forth a new set of questions concerning access, curricula, budgeting, and governance to replace the questions being posed by educational reformers. Part I addresses financial resources and needs for college staffing, curriculum, management information services, capital outlay, and deferred maintenance. Part II addresses the issue of accountability to the community colleges' mission through accreditation, planning, research, and evaluation. Part III offers a brief summary of recent reform legislation, highlighting bills concerned with the definitions of credit and noncredit college courses; a course classification system; a statewide grading policy; general education requirements; a definition of recreational, vocational, and personal development courses; and a statewide course repetition policy. This section also describes four innovative college-initiated programs; i.e., the Learning, Assessment, Retention Consortium; the preparation of definitions related to developmental education; articulation with high schools; and involvement in the Western States Network for Learning, Assessment, and Retention. Concluding comments urge the colleges and the California Legislature to join together to affirm the Community College Mission Statement and to provide a stable funding plan to support this mission. (AJL)

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Mission,
Finance,
Accountability:

A Framework
For Improvement

CACC

Commission On Instruction

Subcommittee On Reforms Review

Barbara F. Mertes
Senior Author

California Association of Community Colleges

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governmental bodies the policies determined to be in the best interests of community college education, (c) assisting member institutions in developing and promoting solutions to problems of local concern, (d) facilitating the efforts of institutions, segments, organizations, and agencies to work and speak cooperatively on behalf of the California community colleges, (e) informing members of the community college community and the general public of current issues and research in community college education, and (f) developing human and financial resources to aid the member institutions and the Association to enhance community college education.

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MISSION, FINANCE, ACCOUNTABILITY: A FRAMEWORK FOR IMPROVEMENT

California Association of Community Colleges

Commission On Instruction

Subcommittee On Reforms Review

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**CACC PRESS
SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA**

PREFACE

This paper is the first in a series published by CACC PRESS. It reports the findings of a subcommittee of the Commission on Instruction of the California Association of Community Colleges (CACC) established to research reforms that had occurred in the California Community Colleges during the past few years. In particular, the subcommittee was charged to examine these reforms as they related to instructional concerns.

During the subcommittee's review, it became apparent that, via funding, the identified reforms had affected the California Community College Mission. As a result, the subcommittee concluded:

"... we in the community colleges and the Legislature need to affirm our primary mission. We must proceed together in this affirmation of mission by using a long-range, orderly, and thoughtful priority process. We believe that we have the internal leadership necessary to accomplish this task; we believe, further, that this leadership possesses the capability and vision to evaluate appropriate methods and approaches which will direct us toward improving the learning/teaching environment within our institutions. What we do not have but desperately need is a stable, long-range, state-based fiscal commitment to support us in achieving this singular goal.

"The time is now for California's Community Colleges and the California Legislature to join together in the affirmation of the Community College Mission Statement and to the provision of a proper and stable funding plan to support this mission."

In pursuing these objectives, the subcommittee has outlined a framework for action which details the Fiscal Support, Institutional Resources, and Institutional Accountability mechanisms necessary to accomplish an improved teaching/learning environment. These mechanisms are summarized in Figure 1 on the following page.

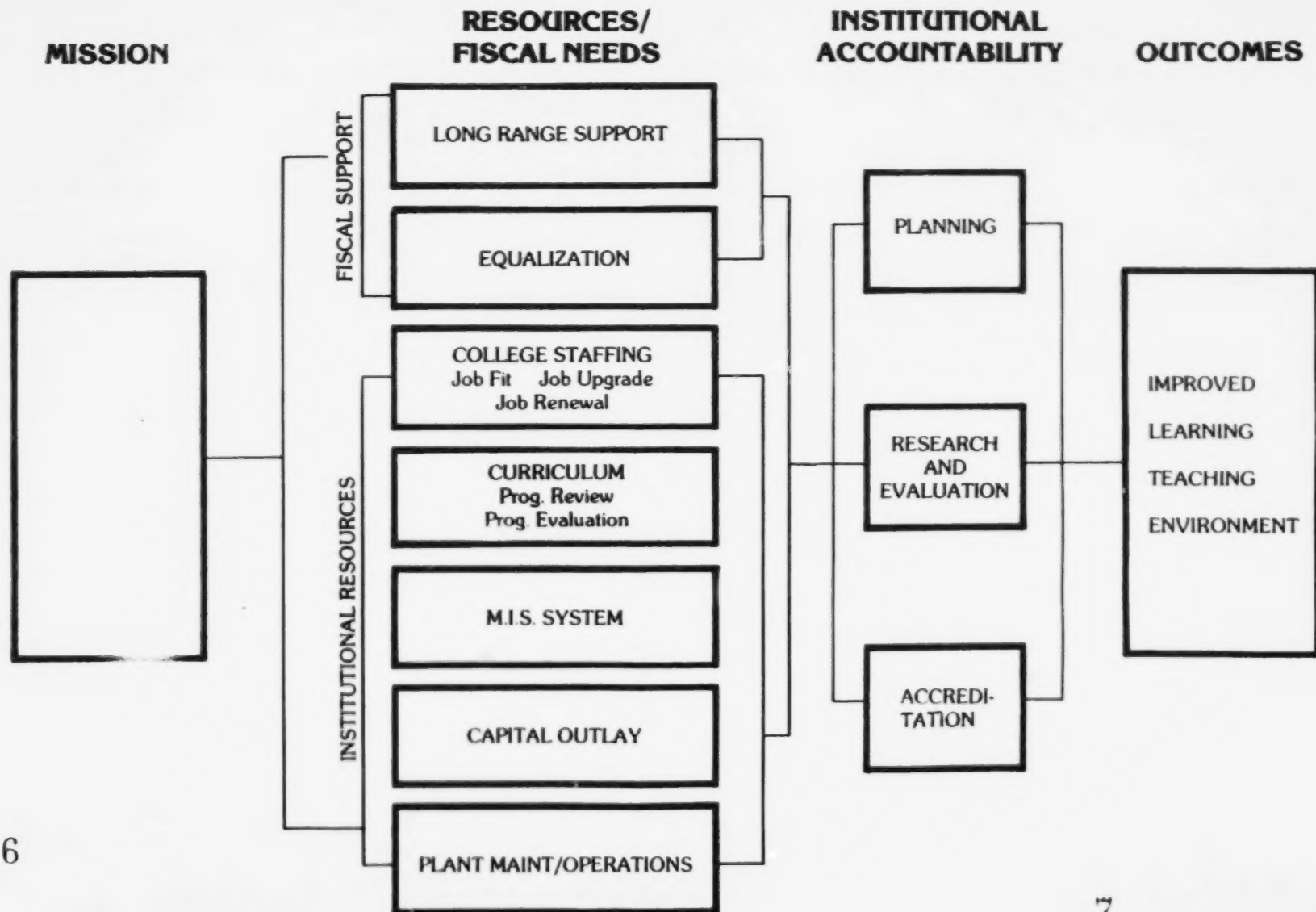
Clearly, what is missing from this structure is a delineation of the Mission for the California Community Colleges. Indeed, until an agreed upon statement of the necessary and essential Mission for these colleges is adopted, the issues and concerns which led to the development of the report will remain unresolved.

The report of the subcommittee, **MISSION, FINANCE, ACCOUNTABILITY: A FRAMEWORK FOR IMPROVEMENT**, was approved by the Commission on Instruction on January 13, 1984, for transmission to the CACC Board of Directors for its consideration. At their meeting of January 14, 1984, the members of the CACC Board of Directors adopted the report as an official paper of the Association.

The members of the Subcommittee On Reforms Review are: Dorothy P. Bray, Assistant Dean, Languages and Literature, Sacramento City College (Chairperson); Barbara F. Mertes, Dean, Chabot College - Valley Campus (Senior Author); Ernest H. Berg, Specialist, Program Evaluation and Approval, Chancellor's Office, California Community Colleges; Douglas W. Burris, President, Sacramento City College; Peter M. Hirsch, Associate Executive Director, California Association of Community Colleges; Grace N. Mitchell, Area Dean, Communications and Humanities, American River College; Denise M. Morgan, Dean of Counseling and Guidance, Citrus College; and Thomas B. Timar, Director of Governmental Affairs, California Association of Community Colleges.

Peter M. Hirsch
Sacramento, California
April, 1984

FIGURE 1
SUMMARY OF THE MAJOR COMPONENTS OF A FRAMEWORK
FOR IMPROVEMENT OF THE CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES



INTRODUCTION

The topic of reform is a prominent one in higher education today. It is a topic surrounded by issues, issues which need to be replaced with specific information that can be used by decision makers.

The following paper developed by Dr. Barbara Mertes, and assisted by a subcommittee of members of the Commission on Instruction of the California Association of Community Colleges, offers a framework for the improvement of community colleges. The paper delimits those factors which make up a strong statement of purpose and outcomes to guide community colleges in the thoughtful planning that can act as reform in 1984 and beyond.

This framework suggests a new set of questions which dramatically contrast with those now being asked by many groups.

1. Current questions asked about students include:

- Which students are being served?
- Which students will be the successful?
- How will students be advised and how will their progress be monitored?

This paper asks: IF WE CONTINUE ON OUR CURRENT COURSE, WHICH STUDENTS WILL NOT BE SERVED?

2. Current questions asked about curriculum include:

- What curriculum will be left as a result of inadequate State support?
- What changes in curriculum and resources will be necessary to increase student success?

This paper asks: CURRICULUM FOR WHOM AND RESOURCES FOR WHAT? INDEED, WHAT IS THE CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE WILLING TO FUND?

3. Current questions asked about mission and reform include:

- Should community colleges continue to offer programs that are also offered by the public high schools and the adult schools?
- What should be the scope and purpose of remedial education?
- Are the community colleges failing to prepare enough students for transfer?
- How will the community colleges increase the success and retention of all students?
- What are the measures of academic quality?

- Who can profit from instruction?
- Should the community colleges maintain the open door?

This paper asks: WHAT MUST BE ACCOMPLISHED IN ORDER TO REPLACE BUDGET-DRIVEN REFORMS WITH THOUGHTFUL PLANNING?

4. Current questions asked about funding include:

- How can existing resources be used more effectively?
- Is there a way to provide a stable funding base for the community colleges?

This paper asks: WHAT RESOURCES ARE NEEDED IN ORDER FOR THE COMMUNITY COLLEGES TO PROVIDE MANDATED SERVICES?

WHAT IS THE NEGATIVE FISCAL IMPACT OF CURRENT SERVICES MANDATES?

BY WHAT PROCESS CAN A LONG-RANGE, STATE-BASED FISCAL COMMITMENT BE SECURED?

5. Current questions asked about governance and the role of community colleges include:

- Is there a way to preserve the autonomy of local governing boards while at the same time providing a united voice for community colleges at a state-wide level?
- How can we use best the consortium/coalition approach to speak with one unified voice?
- If a major reappraisal of the role of community colleges is undertaken, who should do it?
- Which segment of education will take responsibility for raising the literacy and skills levels of inadequately prepared students? To whom will the resources be allocated and what is the rationale for the investment?

This paper asks: IN WHAT WAYS DO WE NOW BEST EXAMINE THE PRIMARY MISSION OF THE COMMUNITY COLLEGES?

To the unanswered questions of the present, the subcommittee has added the to be answered propositions for the future. Their resolution will undoubtedly engage the entire college community in the active dialogue essential to determining what the community colleges in California will be like for the remainder of this century.

Dorothy P. Bray
Sacramento, California
April, 1984

One of the major continuing concerns of the California Community Colleges is directly related to their primary mission — the provision of a high quality, academically responsible learning/teaching environment for a diverse student population; however, during the last seven years, a myriad of events and circumstances have had devastating effects on the California community college mission. Repeatedly the colleges have been asked to alter their curriculum and adjust their student service programs in order to meet the needs of a radically changing student population, to create different courses of study and new counseling services to serve those who had been affected by strident economic and societal conditions, and to provide resources and training to meet the demands of a highly complex and technological job market. In nearly every incident, these demands for change have been imposed upon the colleges without the proper lead time for budget planning or for program evaluation. As a result, the colleges' responses, generally, have been quick but not always thoughtful. Even more seriously, at the same time that these critical demands were being imposed on community colleges, the colleges were strapped with unreasonable fiscal constraints and burdened increasingly with new statewide compliances which seemed to be more punitive than salubrious.

During recent years, California's community colleges have not been without criticism coming from individuals who are directly related to the institutions or from those related to outside agencies and political groups. Unfortunately, in most cases, these critics have confused the issue rather than clarified the mission task. The critics have tended to attack disparate problems failing to understand what effects these separate, and often self-serving, "reforms" would have upon the total institution with its inherent complexities. Simplistic solutions tended to be translated into onerous legislation and proliferated through innumerable rules, regulations, and treatises which often were designed to band-aid a symptom rather than treat the systemic cause. The results continue to deter the institutions from working through and redefining the mission — the mission of delivering a first-rate education to community college students.

The systemic cause relates to the need for the creation of a policy statement which defines the mission of the community colleges for the 1980's.

When the original mission statement was written in the late 1950's and applied through the 1960's and 1970's, it was a mission statement that encouraged student accessibility. California's community colleges were immensely successful in meeting the goal of the mission. Programs and services were created that catered to a wide range of community college students. The returning older student, the immigrant, the unemployed, the under-employed, the disadvantaged, the developmentally disabled, and the special community interest student joined what was once called the "traditional student" populations who were bound for four-year transfer institutions or for occupational careers.

With the diminution of funding and the creation of course hit lists, colleges began lopping off services, ridding staffs, and gutting their curriculums. Standards were absent in the creation of these hit lists, and the accumulation of a 30 million dollar savings in state apportionment monies became the major goal rather than the creation of a reasoned approach to a definition of a mission statement.

In the absence of a reasonable and workable mission statement, the question of student accessibility becomes even more prominent and perhaps, the most difficult question to be addressed is the one which asks, "Who is not to be served by California's community colleges in the 1980's?"

At the heart of this question is the new fiscal reality. The growing imposition of once permissive student fees is evident, and the issue of a state mandate for student tuition becomes a major political debate that strikes at both

philosophical commitment and fiscal need. In the absence of a clear-cut directive, colleges are grappling with the identification of processes which will help them to discriminate-out categories of students who best may be served. Therefore, such topics as minimum threshold, remediation, basic and developmental education, critical thinking and problem-solving techniques, matriculation, diagnostic testing for college course placement, assessment, and follow-up studies designed to trace student success in four-year college transfer programs or in career placement become overriding issues of concern among community college faculty and administrators. It is through these laborious and expensive processes that community college personnel work to "discover" the mission statement and to answer the question of "who can profit from instruction?"

I. RESOURCES/FISCAL NEEDS

The mission statement that defines which students are to be served is directly dependent upon fiscal stability and institution-based resources.

In the past, colleges have not been funded adequately to do the job they need to do well.

The first and major need which must be addressed is a long-range and stable FISCAL PLAN for community colleges. This is the number one priority, for there is no way community colleges can survive without receiving reliable and dependable support for the fiscal needs of California's largest segment of higher education.

Coupled with this provision of a reliable process for fiscal support is the necessity for equalization of funding among community colleges. It is unreasonable to expect low revenue college districts to operate at the same performance level as those who are placed at higher revenue levels. This situation should have been corrected through the legislative process in 1978; it is unconscionable that the lack of equalization funding still continues among community colleges in the 1980's.

Institution-based resources which need to be funded adequately are as follows: college staffing, curriculum, management information services, capital outlay, and deferred maintenance.

STAFFING

The preoccupation with the topic of faculty and administrative competency is a popular theme. Processes for evaluation have been developed at all colleges, and in most cases, work satisfactorily. What appears to be lacking are processes which measure and provide means for improving job fit, job renewal, and job upgrading. Financial resources are badly needed for the provision of these important elements toward improving faculty and staff performance.

Related to the area of staffing is one which has received a tremendous amount of political and philosophical attention — the role of part-time faculty. These discussions have centered mainly on the proper payment and job security of part-time faculty. However, legislation and litigation have tended to confuse rather than clarify the issues.

In the history of California's community colleges, the necessary amount of funding has never been available to provide for the appropriate amount of payment and for the careful evaluation of part-time faculty services; yet, these faculty make up a good percentage of the community college teaching force. Community college personnel are ready to discuss the topics of competency, evaluation, credentialing, tenure, and pro-rata pay as these apply to administrators and to full- and part-time faculty, but changes cannot be effected without new and adequate funding.

CURRICULUM

The issue of curriculum is directly connected to an earlier question: "Who is not to be educated by community colleges?" Simply stated, the related question dealing with curriculum is "curriculum for whom?"

Both mandated and voluntary curriculum reforms in the past four years addressed peripheral questions but did not strike at the heart of the issue. College curriculum committees performed institutional self-studies by attempting to identify AA degree courses, baccalaureate level equivalency courses, and general education courses, and in most cases, did not consider new instructional delivery systems which more appropriately match the educational needs of their current student populations. Several desired programs, particularly in the technical-occupational areas, were not implemented because equipment costs were prohibitive, and additionally, many existing full-time faculty were not prepared to teach the more complex technical subject areas.

Differential funding is a major issue under study. Before decisions are made concerning such funding, a mission statement must be clearly delineated and an answer provided to the critical questions: "Curriculum for whom?" — and — "Resources for what?"

MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SERVICES

MIS systems, in most colleges, need careful examination and up-dating. The demands placed on colleges to provide information and data for state reports are overwhelming.

The institutional use of MIS is vital in producing a more effective and efficient learning/teaching environment for students and staff as this service relates to student registration, to learning resource centers, to counseling services, to personnel files maintenance, to plant maintenance and operations, and to institutional planning and research. MIS provides a sophisticated yet accessible system for information gathering and sharing and is a prime factor for improving institutional efficiency and performance. MIS may be an expensive operation, but funding must be available for providing and delivering a first-rate information system within community colleges if the colleges are to know how well they are serving their students.

CAPITAL OUTLAY FUNDING

Clearly, one of the most pressing needs in California's community colleges is the need to prepare students for employment in one or another of the state's most advanced technological centers. Yet, in the most recent years, funding has not been available in order for the colleges to purchase or to lease up-to-date equipment on which students can learn such needed subjects as computer science, robotics, computer-assisted drafting, electronics, or word processing.

The concern with the effectiveness of technical-occupational education delivery systems is a prime consideration among community college educators. The recent formation of the California Community College Occupational Education Coalition is evidence of the concern held by the members of ten major community college associations who wish to improve technical-occupational courses and programs in California's community colleges.

PLANT MAINTENANCE AND OPERATIONS

Students and staff must be provided with a learning/teaching environment which has decent facilities and attractive surroundings. Funds for deferred maintenance have not been available; therefore, major campus repairs have not been made. Deferred maintenance needs long-range planning to be effective; only proper funding can allow staff to plan efficiently for carrying out a reasonable deferred maintenance program.

II. INSTITUTIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY

Once the mission of the California Community Colleges has been defined, the question of accountability to that mission can be outlined. In addition to accreditation, institutional accountability should include planning, and research and evaluation.

PLANNING

Institutional planning involves the college, the community, and local businesses and industries. Institutional planning may include the local setting and may incorporate larger regional aspects; however, the college providing the leadership for the institutional planning must become the focal point for all decisions related to the education of its students, especially as this education relates to job preparation and training. The college may use input from its local constituencies as a basis for decision-making. Mechanisms for institutional planning can be expensive and time-consuming. Nevertheless, without an examination of local or regional trends and needs, and institution clearly falters in delivering the educational program which it needs to deliver.

RESEARCH AND EVALUATION

Institutional research and evaluation serve as direct aids to institutional planning; they serve also as valuable tools in judging the accountability of the mission statement. Data from institutional research can help community colleges determine what instructional and student service resources can best be used to identify, counsel, educate, and articulate students toward college transfer programs and/or to careers. One of the major faults of California's community college research data lies in the fact that the colleges have not produced their own data base. With the exception of a few institutional studies, community college student data have been produced, interpreted, and judged by outside agencies which have provided little useful insight or help to individual community colleges in effecting their mission.

ACCREDITATION

Accreditation remains as one of the most effective accountability processes for evaluation of the California Community College mission statement. Clearly delineated performance criteria have been created to measure the effectiveness of colleges meeting those standards acceptable for accreditation. Peer evaluation coupled with appropriate expertise from outside institutions and agencies has assured that community colleges perform those duties and responsibilities charged to their particular mission; however, all effective accreditation depends heavily upon the renewal of this mission statement.

III. THE ONGOING TOPIC OF REFORM

With additional fiscal provisions by the state, there is always the question of reform. Witness the current mandates included in SB 813. We suggest that "reform" is not a new topic for California community colleges. During the past four years, six separate legislative mandates have been imposed on community college instructional programs. The six mandates, recently added to Title V, deal with the definition of a college course, the inauguration of a course classification system, the establishment of a statewide grading policy, the creation of guidelines for the identification of general education requirements for an AA degree, a definition of recreational, avocational, and personal development courses, and the development of a statewide course repetition policy.

DEFINITION OF CREDIT AND NONCREDIT COURSES AND COMMUNITY SERVICES CLASSES

AB 8 (1979) mandated that the Community College Chancellor conduct a study and recommend policy on the determination of credit and noncredit courses and community services classes. Part I of the report was submitted to the Legislature in December, 1979. An important conclusion of the report suggested that it was not possible to make valid educational and funding decisions about community college courses based on the classification of credit and noncredit. That conclusion led to the statement of the principle that the determination of the credit or noncredit status of a community college course was an educational matter which should be determined at the local level in accordance with state minimum standards. (Title V: 55002)

CLASSIFICATION OF COURSES

Part II of the credit/noncredit report to the legislature presented a method of classifying the educational offerings of community colleges in terms other than credit or noncredit.

The classification system was implemented in all California community colleges in 1981-82. The most important finding after courses were "classified" was that an overwhelming percentage of the workload in community colleges was generated by transfer and vocational courses. (Title V: 55001)

GRADING POLICY

The revised grading policy was designed to correct two practices most often criticized: the liberal withdrawal practice of students from courses (W) and the elimination of the F grade. The main thrust of the revised grading policy was directed toward the improvement of academic standards in community colleges.

The revised grading policy was adopted by the Board of Governors in 1981. The anticipated outcome for the imposition of this statewide grading policy would be the awarding of fewer W's, the awarding of F grades, and the placing of more students on either academic or progress probation. (Title V: 55750-55765)

GENERAL EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS

In 1981, along with many other colleges and universities, particularly the California State University system, the California Community Colleges determined that the general education requirements should be studied in order to increase "academic rigor" and to increase the number of general education courses required for an AA degree. These recommendations became effective July 1, 1983.

The most notable revisions to the general education requirements were the addition of a proficiency requirement in reading, writing, and mathematics; a required writing course which emphasizes expository and argumentative writing; and an increase in the number of general education units required to complete the AA degree. (Title V: 55800-55810)

RECREATIONAL, AVOCATIONAL, AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT COURSES

In 1983, the Community College Board of Governors approved new regulations which strengthened the minimum requirements for a credit course and placed limitations on the re-introduction of the 1982-83 "hit list" courses into credit programs.

The original "hit list" was designed to reduce \$30 million of state apportionment money from community college budgets, thereby averting the imposition of fees on community college students during the 1982-83 fiscal year. The problems with this process were the difficulty to define "recreational, avocational, and personal development courses" and to defend the omission of courses for community college credit which were being offered for credit at the California State University and the University of California. (Title V: 55002 and 55182)

COURSE REPETITION

The Legislature expressed concern with students' repeating courses too many times at state expense. Revised regulations regarding course repetition, approved by the Board of Governors in 1983, permit certain courses designated by local district governing boards to be repeated 3 times in semester calendar colleges and 5 times in quarter calendar colleges. (Title V: 58161)

DISCUSSION

To date, there are no data available to measure what negative fiscal impact these six legislative mandates have had on community college budgets or what positive educational effect they have had on the improvement of instruction for community college students.

On the other hand, at the same time that these six legislative mandates were being implemented, four major innovative, college-initiated programs were being developed. These programs deal with the

improvement of student learning, assessment, and placement in college courses; the creation of accepted definitions relating to developmental education in California; the design of exemplary articulation models between community colleges and secondary schools; and the development of a Western States Network for Learning, Assessment, and Retention.

These voluntary "reform" activities have had a demonstrated positive effect in helping colleges solve difficult and real instructional problems.

LEARNING, ASSESSMENT, RETENTION CONSORTIUM

A major "reform" effort in the California Community Colleges is being addressed by the LARC CONSORTIUM, a network of California's community colleges which collectively addresses problems and solutions related to student learning, assessment and retention. This consortium is collecting and publishing a research data base of assessment practices and outcomes, engaging in cooperative planning among colleges in order to improve services and outcomes, providing a description of learning skills programs, and developing an Assessment/Placement Model. The activities of this Consortium have resulted in the direct participation of 70 colleges and 1,000 faculty and staff in developing assessment systems, improving remedial programs, and sharing information.

DEFINITIONS RELATING TO DEVELOPMENTAL EDUCATION IN CALIFORNIA

In November, 1982, the Learning Assessment Retention Consortium colleges co-sponsored a Charrette Workshop with the California Association of Community Colleges. The purpose of the Charrette was to clarify terminology used in developmental education and to encourage the use of common terminology across the State of California. Over 150 participants in this workshop produced recommendations that include the following: reaffirmation of the role of remediation in the California Community Colleges; proposed deletion of the following terms: basic skills, compensatory education; and definition and proposed adoption of the following terms: learning skills program, remedial education, developmental education, preparatory program.

ARTICULATION WITH HIGH SCHOOLS

Improving linkages with feeder high schools is an emerging priority for the California Community Colleges. Among several notable efforts in improving community college-high school connections are a project between Gavilan Community College and its feeder high schools, and Sacramento City College and the Sacramento Unified School District. The latter project is characterized by the development of a formal articulation council composed of members of the college and the high school system who have designed and implemented activities in assessment, curriculum, and staff development.

WESTERN STATES NETWORK FOR LEARNING, ASSESSMENT AND RETENTION

Five Western states have joined in efforts to develop a Western States Network to address problems of learning, assessment, and retention. Based on the California LARC model, the Network includes the states of Arizona, Alaska, Oregon, and Washington.

CONCLUSION

While these latter four and other "reform activities" suggest that community colleges are committed to providing their students with a first-rate learning/teaching environment, we in the community colleges and the Legislature need to affirm our primary mission. We must proceed together in this affirmation of mission by using a long-range, orderly, and thoughtful priority process. We believe that we have the internal leadership necessary to accomplish this task; we believe, further, that this leadership possesses the capability and vision to evaluate appropriate methods and approaches which will direct us toward improving the learning/teaching environment within our institutions. What we do not have but desperately need is a stable, long-range, state-based fiscal commitment to support us in achieving this singular goal.

The time is now for California's Community Colleges and the California Legislature to join together in the affirmation of the Community College Mission Statement and to the provision of a proper and stable funding plan to support this mission.

There is no question that the task will be difficult, time-consuming, and costly; it, also, will be an invigorating, satisfying, and beneficial creative renewal, a re-affirmation of purpose and a re-dedication of efforts toward defining the primary goal — the education of students in one of California's prime institutions of higher learning.

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Karla D. Wages, Receptionist